

Minutes
Board of Elections Supervisors
29 October 2015

Members Present: Janet Evander, Maria Mackie, Jack Robson, Mary Katherine Theis, Terry Wertz.

Jack Robson called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. The meeting's sole purpose was to formally adopt a practice that had been in place for years but was never formally published to all candidates and potential candidates. The practice concerned the definition of "gifts" and "valuable things" or "things of value" as applied to campaign expenditures.

Past practice, has been to allow light beverages to be provided at political meetings, but never food. We've also allowed cheap advertising gifts like pens, pencils, refrigerator magnetic reminders, etc.

In keeping with past practice the Board adopted the following statement as its policy.. It or statements with equivalent wording will be published as guidance to candidates and others covered by the City Code.:

Campaign Expenditures

The Board of Election Supervisors (BOES) is often asked about the propriety and legality of providing food, beverages, and gifts to voters.

Maryland State law:

§ 13-602. Prohibited acts.

*(a) Enumerated. — (1) A person may not directly or indirectly give, offer, or promise money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, **or any other valuable thing** to another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring that person to vote or refrain from voting for or against:*

(i) an individual, question, or measure at an election or political convention; [emphasis added]

The BOES has determined that light beverages such as coffee, tea, juice, and soda may be provided at political meetings, but never food of any type. "Other valuable things" exclude items such as very inexpensive advertising gifts. These include imprinted pens, pencils, refrigerator magnetic reminders, etc.

If there are any questions please contact the BOES.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15.